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SUBJECT: INSTRUCTIONS FOR CUBA EMBARGO RESOLUTION

¶1. The Department instructs USUN to vote against the resolution, "Necessity of Ending the Economic, Commercial, and Financial Embargo Imposed by the United States of America against Cuba," scheduled for consideration by the UN General Assembly on Wednesday, October 29. USUN should draw on the following points in making its intervention during the debate.

¶2. Begin points:

-- Mr. President:

-- Our position on this resolution is well known. Each of the member states of this organization has the sovereign right to conduct its trade with another country as it sees fit subject only to the treaty obligations it has freely undertaken. As a bilateral issue relating to the efforts of the United States to mitigate the impact of the Cuban government's repressive policies toward its own people, we believe it is highly inappropriate that the UN General Assembly consider this resolution. As we have noted in the past, many other states or regional groups at various times have taken action to restrict their exports to and imports from other states for a variety of reasons. There is no doubt that members states represented here today would vigorously defend their right to determine their own national trade policy if it were called into question.

-- Cuba asserts that economic sanctions imposed by the United States on the Cuban government cause serious damage to the welfare of the Cuban people. In fact, as we have conclusively demonstrated since the General Assembly first began debating this resolution in 1992, U.S. trade policy toward Cuba is carefully designed to permit the Cuban people access to food and humanitarian goods, but to limit the ability of Cuba's repressive

government to benefit and consolidate power through its authoritarian control over the Cuban economy. Our trade policy above all seeks to keep away from Cuba's leaders resources that they would use to strengthen their repressive political and economic system.

-- Indeed, the American people remain the largest providers of humanitarian aid to the Cuban people. In 2007, the American people provided \$240.5 million in private humanitarian assistance in the form of gift parcels filled with food and other basic necessities (\$179.4 million), non-agricultural humanitarian donations (\$20.6 million), and medical donations (\$40.5 million).

-- In addition to offering U.S. Government assistance, the U.S. has increased existing authorizations for U.S.-based NGOs to provide larger amounts of humanitarian assistance, including in the form of cash donations, to help address the basic needs of the Cuban people. We have already authorized over \$10 million in private cash donations.

-- This year, the United States has been especially sensitive to the plight of the Cuban people in light of the devastation wrought by hurricanes throughout the Caribbean. Cuba has suffered great damage from Hurricanes Gustav and Ike since the end of August. Some assistance has been delivered through non-governmental relief and humanitarian organizations, but more is needed to help the Cuban people, and under these extraordinary circumstances the U.S. Government stands ready to provide that assistance. The U.S. Government has offered - on four separate occasions - to provide the Cuban people with up to \$5 million in emergency humanitarian assistance to those in dire need.

-- On September 3, 2008 the U.S. Government issued a disaster declaration in response to the damage caused by Hurricane Gustav and made available \$100,000 in cash relief assistance to humanitarian organizations working in Cuba. The U.S. Government also offered to provide a humanitarian assessment team to assist in producing rapid emergency assessments of health, sanitation, water, shelter and food supply. That offer was rejected by the Cuban government.

-- In the wake of the damage caused by Hurricane Ike, the U.S. Government set aside an additional \$200,000 for non-governmental relief organizations, and reiterated our offer to provide a humanitarian assessment team. Again, the Cuban government rejected our offer.

-- On September 13, 2008 the U.S. Government offered a relief package of roughly \$5 million that included an unconditional offer of humanitarian assistance to benefit 135,000 Cuban hurricane victims and continued assistance to non-governmental relief organizations. For the third time, the Cuban government rejected our offer.

-- On September 19, 2008 the U.S. Government offered unconditionally to provide relief supplies directly to the Government of Cuba at a value of approximately \$5 million. These supplies are composed of family emergency shelters and household kits which could assist up to 48,000 Cubans affected by the hurricanes. The Cuban government has not responded to this offer of assistance.

-- As is well known, U.S. law permits the sale of medicine, medical supplies and agricultural products to Cuba. The United States is Cuba's top supplier of food. U.S. producers exported \$446 million in agricultural products to Cuba in 2007. Since Hurricane Ike struck Cuba on September 7, the U.S. has licensed \$396 million in agricultural sales to Cuba. Lumber, an important reconstruction material, is included within this

category of agricultural sales. The United States has authorized \$53 million in humanitarian donations by U.S. entities to hurricane victims, including building materials to help storm victims to repair their homes. We have also authorized gift parcel consolidators to export \$124 million in gift parcels to Cuba.

-- Despite this clear demonstration of U.S. interest in the welfare of the Cuban people, Cuban officials, including their Chief of Mission in Washington Jorge Bolanos, continue to make outrageous statements about the nature of U.S. sanctions. It is indicative of the lack of interest the Castro regime has in the well-being of its own people that it would refuse sincere offers of assistance, choosing instead to prolong their suffering as a pretext for proposing resolutions such as the one we vote on today.

-- In conclusion Mr. President, let me remind this assembly that the real reason the Cuban economy is in terrible condition and that so many Cubans remain mired in poverty, is that Cuba's regime continues to deny its people their basic human and economic rights. Indeed, one Latin American observer once described Cuba as an "undeveloping" country thanks to the policies of the Castro regime that have turned it from one of the region's most prosperous economies to one of the poorest. We again invite the member states, as we have done consistently in debating this resolution in past years, to reject the false arguments of the Cuban government and focus on effecting a transition in Cuba that would restore its people's fundamental rights.

End points.

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